

Warfighting – Week 8
MARINE CORPS DOCTRINAL PUBLICATION (MCDP) 4
WARFIGHTING FUNCTION: LOGISTICS DISCUSSION
FACULTY SPOOL GUIDE

1. Purpose and Overview

This guided document should provide the student with an understanding of basic logistics principles and concepts and their relationship to MCDP 1 and the warfighting concepts.

2. Method

Through lecture and conference group discussion, the class will introduce the students to logistics concepts and the levels of logistics within the U.S. Marine Corps.

3. Endstate

Students should have an understanding of the concepts, doctrine, functions, and principles of logistics and combat service support. They should be able to determine and develop CSS considerations in support of MAGTF operations.

4. Requirements

- a. Read this spool guide.
- b. Read MCDP 4, *Logistics*.
- c. Review educational objectives for lesson E(A)2100.
- d. Discuss the issues for consideration on the course cards with your seminar.

a. What is the definition of combat service support?

Combat service support includes the essential capabilities, functions, activities, and tasks necessary to sustain all elements of operating forces in theater at all levels of war.

b. How important is logistics? (pp. 6-8, 30-32)

Logistics is part and parcel of any attempt to conduct military operations. It is critical to the creation, maintenance, deployment, and employment of forces as well as to the redeployment, reconstitution, and regeneration of those forces after their employment.

- i. Logistics establishes limits on what is operationally possible.
- ii. Logistics activities are conducted in much the same way in peace as they are in war and military operations other than war.
- iii. Logistics helps to ensure the effective use of limited resources.
- iv. Logistics is so important that it frequently shapes the designs of campaigns, battles, and engagements.
- v. Logistics is like paddle ball in that logistics acts as the string; it doesn't determine where the ball goes but it does determine how far it goes.
- vi. If logistics sets the limits, it follows that one of our key objectives must be to ensure that limits imposed by logistics do not inhibit effective operations.
- vii. Commanders must consider logistics in the development of plans and allocation of resources.

c. What is the human dimension of logistics? (p. 19)

Logistics deals primarily with the physical world, and it has considerable effect on the moral (i.e., psychological) aspect of war. Logistics plays an important role in the cohesion of a fighting force. By providing the necessities of life, effective logistics frees members of a force from preoccupation with their own needs. This allows them to focus their physical and mental energies on their military duties.

By displaying economy, adaptability, fairness, flexibility, and innovation, a logistics system can foster the sense that those in charge know what they are doing.

d. What is the relationship between strategic, theater (operational), and tactical operations and logistics? (pp. 12, 49-51)

The actions that comprise logistics are rarely isolated. Rather, they are but small steps in long, interrelated, and highly complex chains of activity.

- i. The strategic relationship is the ability of a nation to employ forces to achieve national objectives.
- ii. The theater (operational) relationship is the ability of a nation to concentrate those forces in the theater.
- iii. The tactical relationship is the ability of a nation to have its forces engage an enemy in operations and sustain them there.
- iv. Effective support of military evolutions depends on the successful conduct and integration of logistics activities at all three levels.

e. What are the six functional areas of logistics/CSS? (p. 47)

- i. Supply
- ii. Maintenance
- iii. Transportation
- iv. General engineering
- v. Health services
- vi. Services

f. How can logistics overcome the effects of friction? (pp. 81-88)

Logistics is subjected to friction to the same degree as other functions in war. Therefore, we must cope with friction in the same manner in which we cope with other aspects of warfighting. We must strive for simplicity both in planning and execution of logistics. Designing flexibility into the logistics system provides the means for adaptation to the changes resulting from friction and the exercise of initiative and creativity.

g. How does operational tempo impacts logistics? (pp. 85-87)

We seek to operate at a higher tempo than the enemy. An effective logistics system enables us to quickly focus combat power and sustain that combat power throughout the course of operations.

Logistics

- i. makes a critical contribution to the generation and maintenance of tempo.
- ii. sustains that combat power throughout the course of operations.
- iii. maintains tempo by rapidly delivering supplies, repositioning forces, and repairing or replacing damaged equipment.
- iv. enhances tempo by anticipating requirements.
- v. Requires logisticians at all levels to be aware of the full scope of the operational so that, at any given time and place, they understand what needs to be done to keep moving forward.

h. How important is logistics to maneuver warfare? (pp. 82-87)

Logistics must support our warfighting philosophy. Logistics must be able to influence the conduct of maneuver warfare. If applied properly, logistics will have a significant impact on the ability to gain an advantage over the enemy, generate tempo, and exploit opportunities.

- i. The practice of maneuver warfare has fundamental implications on the way a force is organized, moved, managed, and supplied.
- ii. Logistics units normally do not directly attack the enemy. Their actions have a significant impact on the ability to gain an advantage over the enemy, generate tempo, and exploit opportunities.

i. Why do we weigh a main effort logistically? (p. 84)

The main effort is the commander's bid for success during an operation. It is at the main effort that a given/limited resource is mostly likely to have the greatest impact on the outcome of the battle or campaign. The main effort is normally the first in line.

j. What is the difference between "pushing" logistics and "pulling" logistics? (pp. 63-67)

- i. The push system uses calculations of anticipated logistics requirements to position or deliver resources where and when they are likely to be needed. This concept is normally associated with the offense.
- ii. When the pull system is used, the operating unit directly controls the orders for resupply as well as calls for engineering, maintenance, and other support services.

Characteristics of the push and pull concepts include the following:

Push System	Pull System
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Possible excesses/redundancy• Can burden user with excess stocks• Possible waste of transportation• Decentralized assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lack of responsiveness• Action required by user• Centralized assets

k. When do you want to do one or the other?

The **push** system is usually employed during offensive operations.

The **pull** system is usually employed during defensive operations.

l. Can you combine the two systems? (p. 66)

Yes. You may want to “push” support to the main effort and use the “pull” system for supporting efforts.

You may want to establish an intermediate staging base (ISB) in support of the operation. There are many reasons to combine the two methods.

Push System	Pull System
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Active• Resources scheduled• Logistics anticipates• Less efficient• Based on estimate of consumption due to operational tempo	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reactive• Resources requested• Unit anticipates• More efficient• Based on actual consumption rates

m. Why would you combine pushing and pulling logistics?

- Limited assets.
- Combining the two techniques provides a degree of flexibility because the commander, due to success on the field of battle, may need to reorient or redesignate a main effort. Therefore, the combination of the two techniques provides the flexibility and agility that enables logistics to exploit opportunities as they are presented.

n. Why is it important that the logistician participate in the planning process? (pp. 93-98)

Successful logistics begins with planning. The objective of logistics planning is to match the development and sustainment activities of the logistics system to the logistic requirements of the operating force. Planning provides the means to evaluate the feasibility of various tactical options and to determine the adequacy of resources to support them. With this in mind, the logistician must understand the commander’s intent and participate in the commander’s conceptual planning to ensure that operational concepts under consideration can be supported by the resources available. But at the same time the logistician must ensure that logistic factors have been taken into account in the development of the operational design.

- Marine logistics functional planning at the strategic and operational levels usually encompasses two related planning areas: force deployment planning and sustainment planning.

- ii. Force deployment and sustainment plans must be developed concurrently to ensure that the required combat elements can be deployed and sustained to accomplish the mission.
- iii. We strive for three primary characteristics in the development of logistics plans:
 - (a) Integration with operational plans
 - (b) Flexibility
 - (c) Simplicity.

Integrated planning from all elements of the MAGTF will ensure that the MAGTF plan is executable.

Historical examples of possible integrated planning include the following:

- Little Big Horn: Custer chose not to bring his Gatling guns because the support trains would slow him down. He also pushed one day ahead of his pack animals, leaving his unit's extra ammunition behind.
- The Battle of the Bulge: The great December 1944 German offensive in the Ardennes and Schnee Eifel; the armored drive to isolate the Anglo-Saxon Allies by the seizure of Antwerp; and the defensive battles fought by units of the U.S. (Third and First Armies).

When we look at the Battle of the Bulge, the strictures imposed on German maneuver by logistical failures are evident as is the superior American capability to reinforce and resupply the defense.

5. Errata

None.

6. TET Organization

Not applicable.

7. Recommended Timeline

Not applicable.